

## Chapter 8

### Special Topic

#### Introduction

Special topics are those issue areas that became important during the development of the plan and warrant additional information, but are not necessarily able to be described in geographic terms such as an interchange.

One special topic that emerged from the planning process was an agricultural business park. The following sections will introduce the topic and discuss it in some level of detail.

#### Agricultural Business Park

In recent years there has been an increased awareness by the general public that agriculture is a business, indeed an industry, and that parts of agricultural processing may not be particularly appropriate in rural areas due to infrastructure needs, but are not necessarily well-suited for standard industrial parks because of their agricultural product inputs and relationship with the land. This awareness has led to a variety of means of encouraging value-added agriculture and the processing of agricultural products. One of these models is the agricultural business park.

An agricultural business park uses the elements of a traditional business park that are successful, such as appropriate zoning, infrastructure, and land that is separated from or buffered from other uses, and combines them with the needs of agricultural products processors. These needs may be access to transportation systems, access to crops or research fields, or other needs specific to the type of agri-business.

#### *Agriculture as Industry*

Agricultural businesses include processors of grain for food, feed, or seed; ethanol or bio-diesel producers; slaughterhouses and animal rendering facilities; canneries; and other businesses that use agricultural products as inputs for production.

The rise in fuel prices in the past several years has accelerated the development of alternative fuel sources such as ethanol and bio-diesel. Many such processing facilities have been developed in the state of Indiana in the past year or two and more are slated for construction.

In some communities, including Greensburg, agricultural production facilities have developed over time in locations that are now creating urban land use conflicts. These uses include stockyards and grain elevators. These

uses are important to the agricultural industry, but like other industries, may have negative impacts on the surrounding areas.

*In addition, the development of urban areas around these facilities can constrain the growth and updating of these uses.*

### *Models of Agricultural Business Parks*

Muncie and Delaware County are one of the state's leaders in the development of zoning for agricultural businesses and creation of an agricultural business park. In 2005 the Delaware County Commission unanimously approved the creation of a new zoning district - the "Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone."

The "Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone" will give Muncie-Delaware County a unique product to market to agricultural businesses looking at the State of Indiana," said Terry Murphy, Vice President, Economic Development for the Vision 2006 Economic Development Program. "This zone classification and eventual Ag Park development seeks to improve the economic stability of area farmers and create new jobs and investment in the county," added Murphy. The purpose of the AB-EZ is to provide a business park-like environment that is supportive to industries that add value to agricultural products produced locally.

Rob Swain, economic development director for the state department of agriculture, said Delaware County is the first community in the state to adopt an ag-park ordinance.

Targeted businesses in the new zone area include existing technology providers of food, fiber, and energy for human, animal, and industrial applications as well as new applications from the rapidly developing areas being discovered through biotechnology.

The AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone was created to provide an area for exclusive location of those industries that use or produce renewable agricultural products or direct derivatives of renewable agricultural products as inputs for their manufacturing, processing, production, research, or refining operations. An AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone is intended to be occupied by multiple industries, including farming operations, so that the infrastructure, by-products, expertise and jointly developed knowledge and technologies to generate new value added agricultural products can be shared and/or reused by the occupying industries.

For an area to be classified as an AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone, the area must contain at least three hundred (300) acres comprised of contiguous or adjoining properties separated only by existing public roads, highways, or railroads. Any future additions to an existing AB Agricultural

Bio-Enterprise Zone shall be contiguous or adjoin in the same manner and add a minimum of twenty (20) acres that is in one tract of land.

The Delaware County Commissioners voted to rezone over 800 acres of land near the town of Shideler from "agricultural" zoning to the county's new "Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone". The zoning change sets the way for the area to be developed as an "Agricultural Industrial Park". It will be Delaware County's fourth industrial park.

The new Agricultural Park is located near State Road 3 and State Road 28 providing potential new businesses with excellent access to both Interstate 69 and Interstate 70. The new park could be a prime location for businesses in the (1) food processing, (2) Ethanol, (3) Biodiesel, and (4) pharmaceutical sectors.

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